WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A nicotine-impermeable container for therapeutic doses of nicotine, comprising:

a) a housing formed of nicotine-impermeable material;

b) a nicotine carrier in the housing for holding a measured amount of nicotine in a form which will allow said nicotine to migrate from the carrier when not completely encapsulated in the housing;

c) said nicotine-impermeable housing including a nicotine-impermeable seal for encapsulating the nicotine carrier and sealing it from the atmosphere;

d) said housing including at least one portion accessible to the carrier for exposing said nicotine carrier to the atmosphere for administration of a therapeutic dose of nicotine when said portion is penetrated or removed.

2. The nicotine-impermeable container of claim 1, wherein the nicotine carrier comprises a porous polymer plug charged with a nicotine free-base.

3. The nicotine carrier of claim 2, wherein the porous plug is formed of polythene.

4. The nicotine-impermeable container of claim 1, wherein the nicotine-impermeable housing includes a permanent portion.

5. The nicotine-impermeable container of claim 1, wherein said portion accessible to the carrier is a selectively penetrable portion attached to the permanent portion by means of a nicotine-impermeable seal.

6. The nicotine-impermeable container of claim 1, wherein the nicotine-impermeable housing comprises forming said housing of a copolymer of acrylonitrile and methyl acrylate.

7. The nicotine-impermeable container of claim 1, wherein the portion accessible to the carrier is formed of aluminum foil coated with a copolymer of acrylonitrile and methyl acrylate.

8. The nicotine-impermeable container of claims 6 and 7, wherein the coating of copolymer of acrylonitrile and methyl acrylate is heat sealed to the housing.

9. The nicotine-impermeable container of claim 1, wherein the sealed internal portion of the nicotine-impermeable housing is oxygen-free.

10. The nicotine-impermeable container of claim 9, wherein the sealed internal portion of the nicotine-impermeable housing is filled with inert gas.

11. The nicotine-impermeable container of claim 10, wherein said inert gas is nitrogen.

12. A cartridge for a nicotine inhaler, comprising:

a) a cartridge housing;

b) a passageway in said cartridge housing;

c) a nicotine reservoir in said passageway for holding a measured amount of nicotine in a form that will allow nicotine vapor to be released into a fluid stream passing around or through the reservoir;

d) said passageway comprising at least two openings communicating outside said housing for allowing a fluid stream to pass through said passageway; and

e) said nicotine reservoir being sealed from the atmosphere by a nicotine-impermeable barrier which includes passageway barrier portions for sealing the passageway on both sides of the reservoir, at least said passageway barrier portions being penetrable for opening said passageway to the atmosphere.

13. The cartridge of claim 12, wherein the cartridge housing is an elongated member, the passageway being defined by the inner surface of the member and the passageway openings being located on opposite ends of the member.

14. The cartridge of claim 13, wherein the elongated member is cylindrical in shape.

15. The cartridge of claim 12, wherein the nicotine reservoir comprises a porous polymer plug charged with nicotine free base.

16. The cartridge of claim 15, wherein the porous plug is formed of polyethylene.

17. The cartridge of claim 12, wherein the nicotine-impermeable barrier comprises forming said housing of a copolymer of acrylonitrile and methyl acrylate.

18. The cartridge of claim 12, wherein the nicotine-impermeable barrier includes forming the passageway barrier portions of aluminum foil.

19. The cartridge of claim 18, wherein the aluminum foil includes a coating on at least one side of a copolymer of acrylonitrile and methyl acrylate.

20. The cartridge of claim 12, wherein the nicotine-impermeable barrier comprises covering said cartridge housing with a layer of aluminum foil.

21. The cartridge of claim 20, wherein the aluminum foil includes a coating on at least one side of a copolymer of acrylonitrile and methyl acrylate.

22. The cartridge of claim 12, wherein the portion of the passageway inside said passageway barrier portions is oxygen-free.

23. The cartridge of claim 22, wherein the portion of said passageway inside said passageway barrier portions is filled with inert gas.

24. The cartridge of claim 23, wherein said inert gas is nitrogen.

25. The cartridge of claim 13 and further including a mouthpiece comprising:

a) an elongated passageway section with openings at both ends;

b) one end of the passageway section adapted to be received in the mouth of the user;

c) the other end of the passageway section including a cartridge with an inner surface adapted to receive and hold said cartridge housing within the passageway, and the mouthpiece, passageway and cartridge communicating with each other; and

d) said other end of the mouthpiece includes a sharpened end around the periphery for penetrating said penetrable passageway barrier portions.

26. The cartridge of claim 25 and further including a dispenser comprising:

(a) a molded plastic dispenser containing a number of compartments and a tray;

(b) said compartments are adapted to accommodate cartridges;

(c) said tray is adapted to accommodate a mouthpiece; and

(d) a sharpened tip, for penetrating the penetrable passageway barrier portions, is located at one end of the tray.

27. A method of preparing a cartridge for a nicotine inhaler, comprising the steps of:

providing a cartridge housing formed at least in part of a nicotine-impermeable material with a passageway through said housing so that a fluid stream can flow through said passageway;

loading a nicotine reservoir under oxygen-free conditions with a measured amount of nicotine in a form that will allow nicotine vapor to be released into a fluid stream passing around or through the reservoir;

maintaining the loaded reservoir in an oxygen-free environment;

introducing the loaded reservoir into said cartridge housing under oxygen-free conditions; and

sealing the loaded reservoir within the passageway by way of nicotine-impermeable barriers which include passageway barrier portions for sealing the passageway on both sides of the reservoir, at least said passageway barrier portions being penetrable for opening said passageway to the atmosphere.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the nicotine-impermeable material comprises a copolymer of acrylonitrile and methyl acrylate.

29. The method of claim 27, wherein the nicotine reservoir comprises a porous polymer plug.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the porous polymer plug comprises polyethylene.

31. The method of claim 27, wherein the nicotine is in the form of a solution.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the nicotine solution comprises a solution of nicotine, menthol and ethanol.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the ratio of nicotine to menthol to ethanol is about 10:1:120.

34. The method of claim 27, wherein the step of loading further includes the steps of:

loading the nicotine reservoir into a vacuum chamber;

creating a negative pressure within said chamber;

adding a nicotine, menthol, ethanol solution into said negatively-pressured chamber; and

removing said loaded reservoirs from said chamber in an oxygen-free environment.

35. The method of claim 27 or 34, and further including the step of sealing the loaded reservoirs in an inert gas atmosphere.

36. The method of claim 27 or 35, wherein the inert gas comprises nitrogen.

37. The method of claim 27, wherein the nicotine-impermeable barrier comprises aluminum foil.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the aluminum foil includes a coating on at least one side of a copolymer of acrylonitrile and methyl acrylate.

39. The method of claim 27 and further including the step of evacuating oxygen from the interior of the cartridge at the time of sealing.

40. The method of claim 27, and further including the step of introducing an inert gas within the interior of the cartridge at the time of sealing.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein the inert gas comprises nitrogen.

42. The method of claim 27, and further including the step of heat sealing the passageway barrier portions to the cartridge housing.

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